

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested for the following reasons:

1. Amendments to Claims

Claims 1-3 have been canceled.

Claims 4, 5, and 8 are unchanged.

Claim 6 has been amended to improve readability by changing “thereto” to –to the inlet port–, but the scope of the claim has not been changed and no new matter has been added.

Claim 7 has also been amended to improve readability by rearranging the order in which installation of the dirt removing portion is recited. Again, the scope of the claim has not been changed and no new matter has been added.

Finally, claim 9 has been added to claim that the vacuum cleaner of claim 6 includes an air stream guide portion which runs substantially parallel to a direction of the suctioned air stream, as described in lines 4-10 on page 13 of the original specification.

2. Rejection of Claims 1-3 Under 35 USC §103(a) in view of U.S. Patent Nos. 4,593,429 (Dyson) and 3,953,184 (Stockford)

This rejection has been rendered moot by the cancellation of claims 1-3.

3. Rejection of Claim 6 Under 35 USC §103(a) in view of U.S. Patent Nos. 4,593,429 (Dyson) and 3,953,184 (Stockford)

This rejection is respectfully traversed on the grounds that the Dyson and Stockford patents fail to disclose or suggest an airstream guide portion provided to direct an air stream “*to the inlet port,*” *i.e., before the inlet port*, as recited in claim 6.

In particular, claim 6 recites that an air stream guide portion (claw 17) is provided near the inlet port to direct a suctioned air stream to an inlet port provided in a centrifugal separation member. The **present invention** therefore concerns an air stream that has *yet to pass* the inlet port, the air stream guide portion being provided to direct the air stream before it reaches the inlet port (as described in lines 14-21 on page 9 of the original specification). In contrast, the Dyson patent is silent as to the air stream guide portion while the **Stockford patent** concerns an air stream that has *already passed* through the inlet.

As the Examiner points out, the Stockford patent discloses a cyclone separator having a substantially circular space including an air stream guide portion. However, Stockford fails to disclose that the air stream guide portion is provided near an inlet 12 to direct an air stream to the inlet 12. Instead, the guide portion of Stockford clearly directs an air stream that has already passed through the inlet 12. Further, as can be seen from the description in lines 66-68 on page 2 of Stockford:

the dust contaminated entering air stream A enters an inlet 12... and follows a downwardly spiraling...

no guide portion is provided to direct an air stream to the inlet 12. Therefore, neither the Stockford patent nor the Dyson patent discloses or suggests the claimed air stream guide portion provided near the inlet port to direct a suctioned air stream *to the inlet port*, and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 6 under 35 USC §103(a) is respectfully requested.

4. Allowable Subject Matter

Allowed independent claims 4 and 8 have not been amended. Claim 5 depends from claim 4

Allowed independent claim 7 has been amended, but the amendments are formal in nature and do not affect the scope of the claim.

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Having thus overcome each of the rejections made in the Official Action, withdrawal of the rejections and expedited passage of the application to issue is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

BACON & THOMAS, PLLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Urcia', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

By: BENJAMIN E. URCIA
Registration No. 33,805

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BACON & THOMAS, PLLC
625 Slaters Lane, 4th Floor
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Telephone: (703) 683-0500

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